

GUIDELINES FOR TEACHING ABOUT THE HOLOCAUST

Workshop Guide, pp. 9-11

1. Define the term “Holocaust.”
2. Do not teach or imply that the Holocaust was inevitable.
3. Avoid simple answers to complex questions.
4. Strive for precision of language.
5. Strive for balance in establishing whose perspective informs your study of the Holocaust.
6. Avoid comparisons of pain.
7. Do not romanticize history.
8. Contextualize the history.
9. Translate statistics into people.
10. Make responsible methodological choices.

DEFINE THE TERM “HOLOCAUST”

Workshop Guide, p. 8

What was the Holocaust? Deconstructing the Definition

The Holocaust was the state-sponsored, systematic persecution and annihilation of European Jewry by Nazi Germany and its collaborators between 1933 and 1945. Jews were the primary victims—six million were murdered; Gypsies, the handicapped and Poles were also targeted for destruction or decimation for racial, ethnic, or national reasons. Millions more, including homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses, Soviet prisoners of war and political dissidents, also suffered grievous oppression and death under Nazi tyranny.

--USHMM

DO NOT TEACH OR IMPLY THAT THE HOLOCAUST WAS INEVITABLE

The Holocaust took place because individuals, groups, and nations made decisions to act or not to act.



Georgia Commission on the Holocaust 2014 Days of Remembrance



Holocaust survivor, Henry Gallant, lights a memorial candle at the Georgia Commission on the Holocaust 2014 Days of Remembrance ceremony at the Georgia Capitol.

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AVOID SIMPLE ANSWERS TO COMPLEX QUESTIONS

Allow students to think about the many factors and events that contributed to the Holocaust and that often made decision making difficult and uncertain.



Ten and eleven-year-old Berlin schoolchildren, 1934.

--Bundesarchiv, Bild 183-2007-0329-501 / CC-BY-SA 3.0

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Board of Regents
University System of Georgia

University System Office
SECURITY QUESTIONNAIRE

NOTICE TO EMPLOYEES: The Sedition and Subversive Activities Act of 1953 (Ga. Laws, 1953), as amended, requires each employee to complete and sign, prior to his/her employment by the State of Georgia, a questionnaire which is designed to establish that there are no reasonable grounds to believe that he/she is a subversive person. A subversive person is defined as one who commits acts, advocates, or teaches the overthrow of the government of the United States or government of the State of Georgia by force or violence or who is a knowing member of a subversive organization.

INSTRUCTIONS: Prepare in original only. Fill in all items. If more space is needed for any item, or explanation, continue under item 5. Please type or print in ink.

1. Name _____ Social Security No. _____

Other Names Used: (Maiden name, names by former marriages, former names changed legally or otherwise: Aliases, nicknames, etc. Specify which, and show dates used.) _____

2. Address _____
Street and No. _____ City _____ State _____ County _____ Phone No. _____

3. Are you now or have you been within the last ten (10) years a member of any organization which to your knowledge at the time of membership advocates or has as one of its objectives, the overthrow of the government of the United States or the government of the State of Georgia by force or violence? Yes No If "Yes," state the name of the organization and your past and present membership status including any offices held therein.

NOTE: If the answer to Question 3 is "yes" and the employing authority deems further inquiry is necessary, you will be notified of such determination. No action adverse to your application will be taken because of an affirmative answer until after such an inquiry, with notice to you and an opportunity for you to present evidence, and only if the results of such inquiry bring your application within the prohibition within the Sedition and Subversive Activities Act of 1953, as amended.

What factors and events would influence your decision as to whether or not to sign a loyalty oath?

Board of Regents
University System of Georgia
LOYALTY OATH

STATE OF _____ COUNTY OF _____

I, (Print your Name) _____, a citizen of _____ State/Country

and being an employee of the University System of Georgia and the recipient of public funds for services rendered as such employee, do hereby solemnly swear and affirm that I will support the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of Georgia.

Signature of Employee

SWORN TO AND SUBSCRIBED BEFORE ME

This _____ day of _____, _____
Month Year

Notary Public

County of _____ My commission expires _____ day of _____
month year

(Affix seal)

PLEASE NOTE THAT EACH OF THE ABOVE DOCUMENTS, THE SECURITY QUESTIONNAIRE AND THE LOYALTY OATH, MUST BE SIGNED AND NOTARIZED.

STRIVE FOR PRECISION OF LANGUAGE

Workshop Guide: Glossary, pp. 12-23

Try to avoid stereotypical descriptions.

Though all Jews were targeted for destruction by the Nazis, their experiences were not the same.

Similarly, all Germans cannot be characterized as Nazis, nor should any nationality be reduced to a singular or one-dimensional description.



PARIS, FRANCE, 1933-1939.
— National Archives and Records
Administration, College Park, Md.



AMSTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS,
December 12, 1933.
— US Holocaust Memorial Museum



PRAGUE, CZECHOSLOVAKIA, 1928.
— US Holocaust Memorial Museum



KRAKOW, POLAND, 1936.
— Archiwum Panstwowe w Rzeszow



LEIPZIG, GERMANY, April 1929.
— US Holocaust Memorial Museum



VILNA, LITHUANIA 1938-39.
— US Holocaust Memorial Museum

STRIVE FOR BALANCE IN ESTABLISHING WHOSE PERSPECTIVE INFORMS YOUR STUDY OF THE HOLOCAUST

Portray individuals as capable of moral judgment and independent decision making.

Students should evaluate sources of information.

Why was a particular text written?

Who wrote it?

Who was the intended audience?

Are there biases in the information?

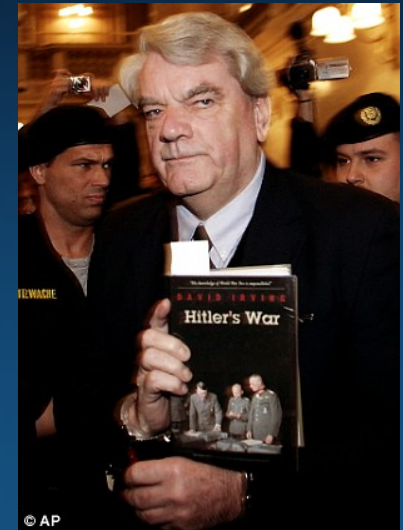
Are important facts omitted?

How has the information been used to interpret events?

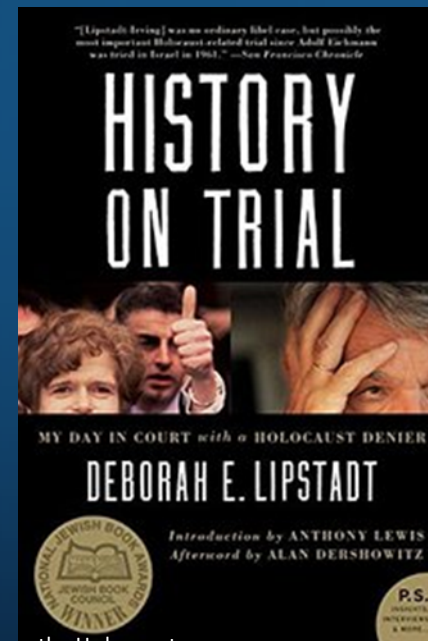
In 1977, David Irving publishes *Hitler's War*, arguing that Hitler neither ordered nor condoned the Nazi policy of the genocide of the European Jews.

Irving distorts historical evidence and scholarly methods to lend legitimacy to his thesis.

In 2000, A British court declares David Irving an “active Holocaust denier.” Irving had sued Emory University historian Deborah Lipstadt for libel following the publication of her 1993 book *Denying the Holocaust: The Growing Assault on Truth and Memory*.



David Irving arrives for his trial in Vienna, in 2006 facing charges of Holocaust denial
--Associated Press



DENIAL



AVOID COMPARISONS OF PAIN

One cannot presume that the horror of an individual, family, or community destroyed by the Nazis was any greater than that experienced by victims of other genocides.



A Bosniak woman at a makeshift camp for people displaced from Srebrenica in July 1995.

--US Holocaust Memorial Museum, gift of Ron Haviv/VII.

DO NOT ROMANTICIZE HISTORY

People who risked their lives to rescue victims of Nazi oppression provide important role models for students. But only a small fraction of non-Jews under Nazi occupation helped rescue Jews. An overemphasis on rescuers can result in an inaccurate and unbalanced account of the history.

"They come upstairs every day... They put on their most cheerful expressions, bring flowers and gifts for birthdays and holidays and are always ready to do what they can."

--Anne Frank

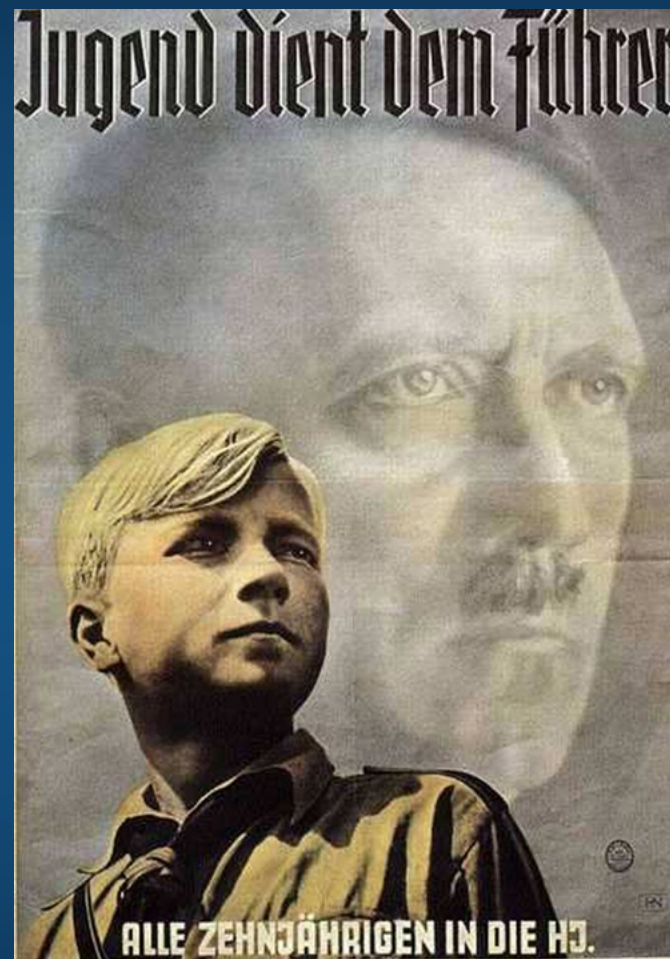


Otto Frank and the Helpers: A photo taken in October 1945. From left to right: Miep Gies, Johannes Kleiman, Otto Frank, Victor Kugler, and Bep Voskuijl.

--annefrank.org



Long live Germany!



"Youth Serves the Leader:
All 10-Year-Olds in the Hitler Youth"

CONTEXTUALIZE THE HISTORY

Events of the Holocaust, and particularly how individuals and organizations behaved at that time, should be placed in historical context. The Holocaust must be studied in the context of European history to give students a perspective on the past events and circumstances that may have contributed to it.

January 30, 1933

Hitler Comes to Power in Germany



On the day of his appointment as German chancellor, Adolf Hitler greets a crowd of enthusiastic Germans from a window in the Chancellery building. Berlin, Germany, January 30, 1933.
—Bayerische Staatsbibliothek

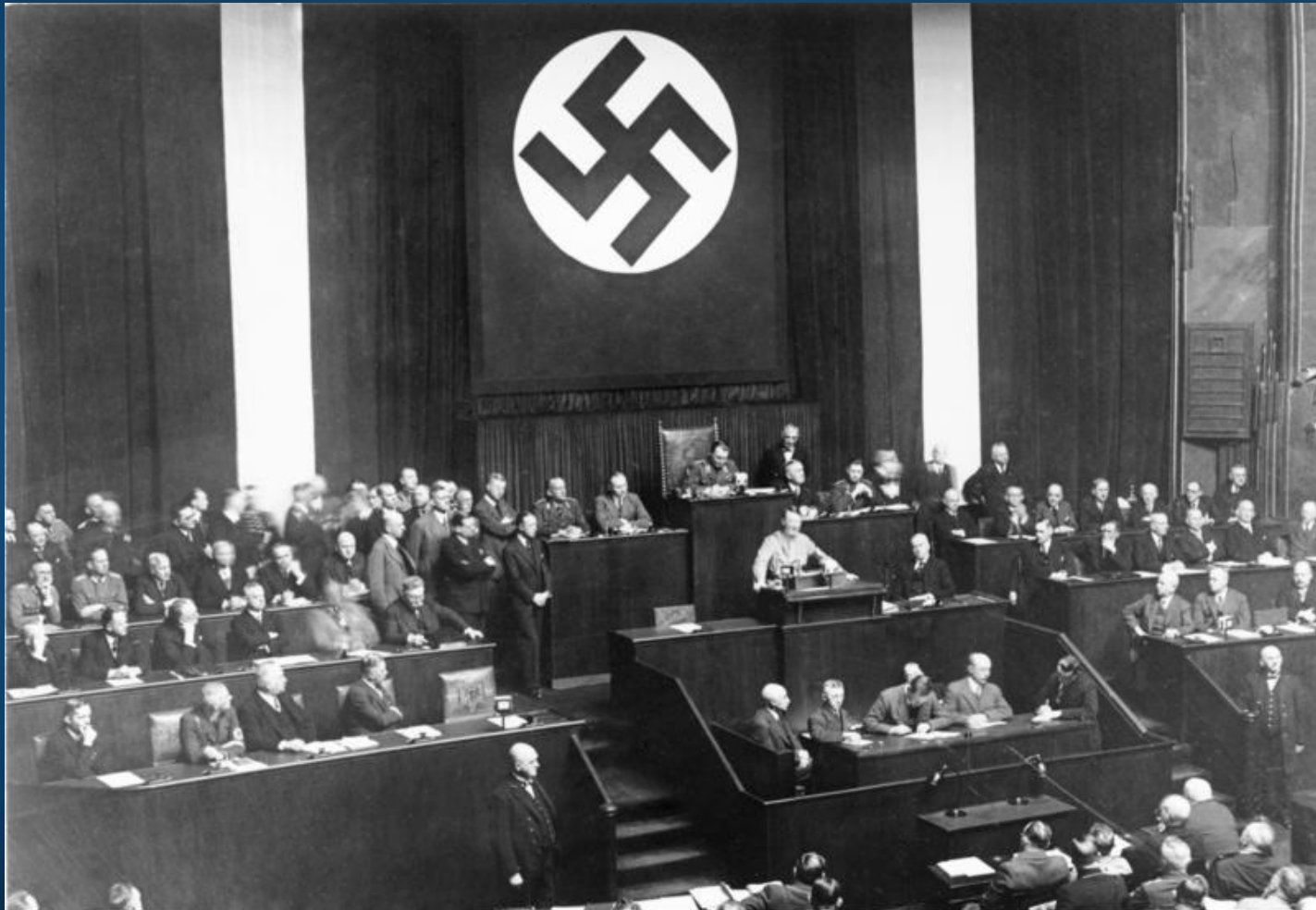


February 27, 1933 Burning of the Reichstag

The Reichstag fire was commonly thought, though never proved, to have been started by the Nazis.
--Imperial War Museum, London

March 24, 1933

Enabling Act is passed, giving Hitler “Emergency Powers”



Hitler's Reichstag speech promoting the Enabling Act was delivered at the Kroll Opera House, following the Reichstag fire.
--Bundesarchiv, Bild 102-14439 / CC-BY-SA 3.0 sallylevine@holocaust.georgia.gov

March 1933

Opening of Dachau



One of the first photos of Dachau concentration camp. Dachau, Germany, March or April 1933.

— National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Md.
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TRANSLATE STATISTICS INTO PEOPLE



The number of victims of the Holocaust challenges our understanding. Show that individual people—grandparents, parents, and children—are behind the statistics. First-person accounts and memoirs portray people in the fullness of their lives, not just as victims, and add individual voices to help students make meaning out of the statistics.

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum:
Tower of Faces exhibit

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

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MAKE RESPONSIBLE METHODOLOGICAL CHOICES

- Graphic material should be used judiciously and only to the extent necessary to achieve the lesson objective.
- Simulations to teach about the Holocaust are pedagogically unsound. The activity may engage students, but they often forget the purpose of the lesson or are left with the impression that they now know what it was like to suffer during the Holocaust. It trivializes the experiences of the victims and survivors.
- Always consider your rationale before choosing resources to teach about the Holocaust.